Ministry of Railways have constituted a Committee in the month of April, 2007 under the Chairmanship of Shri C.L. Kaw, retired Chairman, Railway Board to decide the modalities to hold the secret ballot for recognition of the Unions on the Railways. The Terms of Reference of the Committee are as under:

(i) to frame the modalities to conduct the secret ballot to recognize the Unions;

(ii) to form code of conduct/discipline for the elections on the lines of Code of Discipline of Ministry of Labour suitable for Indian Railways;

(iii) to function as a nodal body for conducting and supervising the secret ballot; and

(iv) to suggest the Mechanism for arbitration on disputes arising out of elections.

Since the exercise is being undertaken for the first time on the Railways and the task is stupendous, it is expected to take some time.

After initial work of framing the modalities is completed, further steps to hold the elections will be taken.

(b) The issue of establishing level playing field between recognized and unrecognized unions is being deliberated upon by the Secret Ballot Committee.

Conversion of fertile land into industrial area

*14. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is aware of the conversion of fertile land into industrial area leading to migration and decrease of agricultural production in rural area; and

(b) if so, what are the steps taken by inter-Ministerial meeting to regulate the same?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) As per available estimates, there is a marginal decline in cultivable land from 185.09 million ha. in 1980-81 to 183.10 million ha. in 2004-05 due to increase in population and diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes such as urbanization, roads, industries, etc. Though there has been a marginal decline in the cultivable land in 2004-05 as compared to 1980-81, the net sown area has more or less remained the same or slightly increased by 1.06 million ha. during this period which mainly contribute to the food grain production.

Since the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Act, 2005 and SEZ Rules, 2006 came into effect on 10th February, 2006, formal approval has been granted for setting up of 362 SEZs. It may be pointed out that in these 362 formal approvals, the total land area involved is only about 48,700 ha. Of these, 90 approvals are in respect of State Industrial Development Corporations/State Government Agencies involving land area of about 21,400 ha.

The Government of India constituted an Empowered Group of Ministers (EGOM) to consider the issues relating to SEZs and the EGOM at its meeting held on 5th April, 2007 recommended that:

- In respect of pending applications for SEZs, these may be processed for in-principle, formal approval and, notifications subject to the conditions that the state government would not undertake any compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs.
- Upper limit of the area required for multi product SEZs to be fixed at 5000 ha. However, State Governments may prescribe a lower limit.
- A comprehensive Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy be worked out ensuring livelihood from the project to at least one person from each displaced family.

Based on the above recommendations, Government of India has decided that Board of Approval (BoA) will not approve any SEZ where the State Govenments have carried out or propose to carry out compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs after 5th April 2007. However, cases in which all persons interested in the land either have not submitted any objection under Section-5A or have withdrawn the objections submitted and have thus acquiesced in the proposed acquisiution of land may be considered. In other cases, where there are objections under Section-5A, the Collector/Acquiring Authority may not proceed with the acquisition for the purpose of SEZ and such cases, if any, brought before the Board of Approval may not be considered.

Government of India also constituted another Empowered Group of Ministers to consider amendments to the Land Acquistion Act and Resettlement and Rehabilitation policy.

Family welfare centres in the country

†*15. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of family welfare centres working in the country, State-wise;

(b) the amount allocated for the same during the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether the amount allocated by Government during this period for family welfare in the country has been fully utilized; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAM DOSS): (a) The State wise details of number of rural family welfare subcentres are given at Statement-I and the number of urban family welfare centres in the country are given at Statement-II (*See* below).

(b) The scheme wise and State-wise amount allocated under the Infrastructure Maintenance during the last three years, i.e. 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 is given at Statement-III, Statement-IV and Statement-V respecively (*See* below).

(c) and (d) For effective utilization of allocated funds, the releases are made after adjusting the unspent balance of the previous years lying with the States. If excess expenditure is incurred by the States over the releases made by the Government of India during the year, the additional funds are released in the form of arrears based on the Audited Statement of Expenditure (ASE) from the State Accountant General (AG).

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.